

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 RSR-01 /057 W

----- 051644

R 251649Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2883

UNCLAS LONDON 08585

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK

SUBJECT: THE NEXT TWO BY-ELECTIONS: RIPON AND ISLE OF
ELY

1. THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE DEFENDING TWO NORMALLY SAFE CONSERVATIVE SEATS AT BY-ELECTIONS IN RIPON AND ISLE OF ELY TOMORROW, BUT PUNDITS ARE CAREFULLY DECLINING TO FORECAST THE RESULTS. DESPITE UNSEEMLY HASTE BY THE CONSERVATIVES IN CALLING THE ELECTIONS (THE WRIT FOR RIPON WAS ISSUED WITHIN THREE WEEKS OF THE DEATH OF THE INCUMBENT), THE LIBERALS HAVE MANAGED TO MOUNT BIG ENOUGH CAMPAIGNS TO THROW AT LEAST ONE OF THE OUTCOMES INTO DOUBT.

2. SIR HARRY LEGGE-BOURKE HELD ISLE OF ELY FOR THE CONSERVATIVES FROM 1945 UNTIL HIS DEATH LAST MAY. AT THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION, IN A STRAIGHT FIGHT WITH LABOR, HE POLLED 60 OF THE VOTE AND HAD A MAJORITY OF 9,600. THE LIBERALS HELD THE SEAT FROM 1929-1945. THEY LAST CONTESTED IT IN 1966 WHEN THEY CUT THE CONSERVATIVE LEAD OVER LABOR TO 1,750. THE LABOR VOTE HAS REMAINED REMARKABLY CONSTANT OVER THE PAST SIX ELECTIONS AND THERE IS A REAL CHANCE THAT LIBERAL INROADS INTO THE CONSERVATIVE VOTE TOMORROW COULD GIVE THE SEAT TO LABOR.

3. THE CANDIDATES ARE JOHN STEVENS (CONSERVATIVE), A LONDON STOCKBROKER AND FORMER PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO HEATH; BARRY YOUNG (LABOR), A PHARMACEUTICAL REPRESENTATIVE AND FORMER LABOR PARTY AGENT; AND CLEMENT FREUD

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TATIVE AND FORMER LABOR PARTY AGENT; AND CLEMENT FREUD

(LIBERAL), TELEVISION FUNNYMAN AND GOURMET.

4. RIPON, LIKE ELY, IS A SCATTERED RURAL CONSTITUENCY.

SIR MALCOLM STODDART-SCOTT HELD IT FROM ITS FORMATION IN 1950 UNTIL HIS DEATH IN JUNE. AT THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION, IN A THREE-CORNERED FIGHT, HE POLLED 60 OF THE VOTE AND HAD A MAJORITY OF 12,000. THE LIBERALS PLACED THIRD. THEY HOPE TO PLACE SECOND TOMORROW AND ARE EVEN TALKING BRAVELY OF TAKING THE SEAT, BUT THAT SEEMS SCARCELY LIKELY.

5. THE CANDIDATES ARE DR. KEITH HAMPSON (CONSERVATIVE), A HISTORIAN AND PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO HEATH AT THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION; DAVID ENGLISH (LABOR), A POLITICAL JOURNALIST; DAVID AUSTICK (LIBERAL), A LEEDS BOOKSELLER AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR; AND REGINALD SIMMERSON, A PERENNIAL CONSERVATIVE ANTI-EC, ANTI-IMMIGRATION CANDIDATE WHO IS NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LONDON08585
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730712/aaaaaaima.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: willialc
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08-Aug-2001 by reddocgw>; APPROVED <15-Aug-2001 by willialc>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE NEXT TWO BY-ELECTIONS: RIPON AND ISLE OF ELY
TAGS: PINT, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005